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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 000130

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [PINS](#) [MARR](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: CANADA TO PRESS EUROPEANS ON AFGHANISTAN AT NATO
FOREIGN MINISTERIAL

REF: A. STATE 7434

[1](#)B. STATE 4834

[1](#)C. OTTAWA 97

Classified By: PolMinCouns Brian Flora. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Canada shares our take on the way ahead in Afghanistan and at the NATO Informal Foreign Ministerial in Brussels on January 26. Foreign Minister MacKay will press our European partners to deliver on the promises they have made on Afghan security and reconstruction. The FM will try to keep ministers focused on Afghanistan, but will be prepared to say the right things about Kosovo and Israel-Palestine should the need arise. Canada will not be in a position to announce new aid for Afghanistan (already its largest recipient) until March. That said, we expect to see strong public statements from FM Mackay in Brussels, followed by considerable GOC outreach at home and in Europe. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) We delivered ref. A demarche to Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Defense and Security Division Director Stefanie Beck on January 23. Beck expressed appreciation for the detailed presentation, noting that she and other DFAIT senior staff will draw from it when they brief Foreign Minister MacKay on January 25.

Steady Progress in Afghanistan

[1](#)3. (C) Canada welcomed reftel and other signals that the U.S. intended to deepen its civil and military engagement in Afghanistan, Beck observed; in part because doing so would undermine European skepticism relating to U.S. intentions and many European NATO partners' excuses for not delivering on their promises.

[1](#)4. (C) The U.S. view of the way ahead in Afghanistan tracked with Canada's, Beck said. Canadian Forces (CF) would participate in a NATO "spring offensive" by pressing on with its current military deployment of some 2,500 troops, most of them in the Kandahar region (RC-S). The CF was employing the hard won lessons of Operation Medusa to ensure that reconstruction, security, and governance were delivered to Afghans immediately after high-intensity operations. These

lessons were paying dividends in the wake of Operation Baaz Tsuka where Canadians were helping the GOA extend governance

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into the region, funding make-work projects, and ramping up construction of the road from Kandahar to Spin Boldak, Beck said.

15. (C) Comment: While DFAIT and the CF "get it", we have heard informally that Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) officials in Afghanistan have resisted shifting the current emphasis from traditional development to high impact post-conflict reconstruction and employment programs. End comment.

16. (C) Beck took particular notice of our suggestion that allies increase ANA training and consider participation in Operational Mentoring Liaison Teams (OMLTs). She planned to flag this request in her interagency discussions and, most likely, in FM MacKay's briefing. Looking ahead, she said, Canada would probably want to intensify its focus on military training and education.

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17. (C) Canada, she noted, agreed with the USG's assertion that NATO-ISAF members must honor commitments made at Riga and elsewhere. This would include increased force contributions, more and more capable enablers, lifting damaging caveats, and the timely delivery of relevant assistance. Canada also agreed that NATO and its partners should do a better job coordinating military and civilian security and reconstruction efforts, and ensuring that the assistance delivered meets Afghan Government and UNAMA-designated requirements.

Deliverables...in March

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18. (C) Turning to deliverables at the Foreign Ministerial, Beck emphasized that Canada had maxed-out its deployable forces and, therefore, had no plan to send additional troops to Afghanistan. Further, Canada was not yet in a position to make any "new and exciting" announcements about aid to Afghanistan, already Canada's largest single aid recipient. That said, the GOC was looking ahead to March when it should have a clearer idea of how large the federal budget surplus would be. Based on current assumptions, she said, the GOC would likely announce a multi-million dollar supplemental assistance package for Afghanistan by the end of March.

Public Affairs

19. (C) On public affairs, Beck remarked that our suggested talking points looked a lot like the GOC's and observed that Canadian popular support for the war had increased in the past few months (up eight points to 58 percent). She speculated that the greater support was due to fewer and less frequent troop deaths, sympathetic press coverage of the military during Christmas, greater media concentration on reconstruction and development, and the winter freeze in Afghanistan. Plus, Canada had "finally" granted its senior civilian PRT official permission to speak to the media, she said. His message, and that of all Canadian officials, was and would continue to be that Canada is doing the right thing in Afghanistan and the war there is winnable.

JCMB

110. (C) FM MacKay already liked the idea of improving and increasing the visibility of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) and would probably agree to elevate the role of its co-chairmen, Beck said. She noted that Political Director Colleen Swords, Assistant Deputy Minister (A/S to U/S equivalent) for Bilateral Relations Jim Fox, and Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan David Sproule would

represent Canada at the next JCMB, scheduled for January 30 in Berlin.

Kosovo

¶11. (C) Canada is in-step with U.S. policy on Kosovo, Beck said. The status process should advance whether or not the Serbians form a government, and E.U.-North American solidarity is critical for dealing effectively with the Serbians and the Russians.

Middle East

¶12. (C) FM MacKay would be willing to discuss his recent trip to the Middle East during the Transatlantic Lunch. Canadian policy with respect to Israel-Palestine largely tracks with U.S. policy. Canada was first to cut off funding when Hamas formed the Palestinian government, and the Canadians are keen to deliver assistance in a manner that bolsters President Abbas' standing.

Comment

¶13. (C) FM Mackay will not announce additional CF deployments or major increases in aid at Brussels. He will, however, use Canada's political capital to press NATO allies to advance our shared objectives in Afghanistan and to explain to European (and Canadian) publics what is at stake for Europe, NATO, and the world in Afghanistan. If the Secretary were to ask, he would also be willing to say the

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QSecretary were to ask, he would also be willing to say the right things about Kosovo and the Middle East.

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